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ABSTRACT

Three reading skills programs were developed as part of one school system's attempt to increase the reading achievement scores of its ninth graders. The first program was designed to establish interdisciplinary and teaching and collaborative learning techniques among the teachers in the "Ninth Grade Academy." The second program involved a dual-text program geared to improving the reading skills of remedial-level freshmen students and encouraging reading in content areas. The third program, a pilot program known as Skilled Comprehenders, was an extension program for continuing growth in reading. It was a multiple-strategy, developmental reading instruction effort emphasizing the total language arts spectrum and utilizing interdisciplinary techniques as well as cooperative learning strategies. It was inaugurated to assist sophomores and involved two high schools. All three programs produced measurable and significant reading level gains. This paper presents three case studies of the programs. Contains 4 tables of data. An appendix contains the stated rationale of the Ninth Grade Academy; outlines of presentations given during inservice training sessions; and a description of the Skilled Comprehenders program as well as program materials. (EF)

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Administration of Multi-Faceted Reading Skills Programs

A Dual-Text Program for Ninth-Graders; Applying Reading Strategies in The Social Studies Content Area And Teaching Reading Skills in A Reading Class

E.R. Marnell

"Difficulty is a severe instructor." The quote is attributed to Edmund Burke whose 18th Century observation might be applied to any endeavor where learning and success are both bounded and dictated by time. Children enter high school at an already critical age in their development—physical, social and psychological and more. Three out of four eighth grade public school students in the Southeast come to high school below proficient reading achievement levels. * What tools can teachers use to bring students to grade equivalent levels that enhance academic success and play a pivotal role in the development of higher order thinking? Will teachers embrace different strategies? Will there be student gains? Yes, according to these case studies.

Source: National Center for Educational statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1998 Reading Assessment.

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A teacher-- mimicking weariness-- pushed a handcart loaded with texts and teaching supplies along a quiet corridor of the high school. The teacher made eye contact with a colleague walking toward the cart. The teachers exchanged smiles. One beseeched the other: "Don't these children ever read? Do they even know how to read?" Neither stopped to speak. They passed each other with sympathetic looks of commiseration.

Can high school teachers using abridged texts aligned to their subject basal text (dual texts) help low level readers comprehend material more quickly? Will reading level gains be measurable? Can students transfer reading strategies in abridged text format to the more detailed basal reader? How does a teacher address equity, self-esteem and behavior?

In keeping with the stated goals of our school system, programs designed to result in an increase in achievement scores are an imperative. All achievement scores are inextricably linked to reading regardless of academic discipline. The emphasis on metacognition—learning to learn—runs throughout our curriculum and every effort hopefully provides its data by which to benchmark success and guide future efforts.

In 1998, when I arrived at our school, our principal was concerned over the low reading skills and learning difficulties of ninth graders and he was determined to address them. Besides encouraging teaching reading in the content area, he wanted the new Ninth Grade Academy structure to emphasize reading as its regimen. The intent was to inculcate reading as a high-profile part of the school's culture.

I was assigned to the Ninth Grade Academy along with a fellow administrator. Duties were more or less divided with it falling that one of us handled more discipline and attendance, while instruction, staff development and on-site presence fell to the other. I tended to work more closely with instructional issues since fate had my office across from the school's assistant principal of instruction and near the physical site of the Academy classrooms. My colleague, an 18-year veteran, had a wealth of knowledge and experience in handling discipline and the attendance office was also located in his office area.

I asked for and received permission to provide reading level testing for our 9th graders to establish baseline data. It was then that I began to work with our reading specialist, a nearly 20-year veteran in her specialty. Impressed by her dedication, drive and experience, I elected to become a reading specialist as well. From the early part of our discussions it was obvious administrators would be called upon to develop instruction skills in reading if they were to also assist in program development for their students and teachers. Plus, in review of my own nearly 10 years in the classroom, I was knowledgeable of reading techniques that worked and I wished to be able to demonstrate them as a recognized member of the reading specialty area—not merely to request that a teacher use them without showing them how or the rationale behind them. That first year the curriculum involved establishing interdisciplinary teaching and collaborative learning techniques among Academy teachers. In addition, a pilot program using dual texts—an abridged version of the basal texts in social science and biology—was introduced in two classrooms with marked success.

The dual-test use was expanded during the second year of the Academy and the emphasis on interdisciplinary teaching as well as collaborative teaching techniques was also increased. As the second year's effort of dual text instruction prepared to get underway, our reading specialist expert who had been critical in its inception, was at retirement and it fell to me to monitor the project to its conclusion. She would remain in contact with school personnel throughout the time, however, and functioned as a consultant. She would even return in June to present a seminar for teachers on the dual text use. The training and orientation sessions will be scheduled for the full complement of Academy teachers this fall.

In the meantime, I had proposed a pilot project known as Skilled Comprehenders as the basis for continuing the growth of reading in the content area instruction, language arts skills and metacognition strategies. Skilled Comprehenders was being presented in both content area and a reading class. The content area portion was at my high school. The reading class application—again via a dedicated principal concerned with raising reading levels—was at a neighboring high school. From the outset it would be hampered by time. It was a pilot project and everyone's duties remained unchanged. The project had no provisions for scheduled meetings, joint teacher-administrator sessions or for review except for the moments we could talk informally either before or after school.

The strategies used in these three programs are neither unique nor new. Perhaps one unique element is that portions of the know-how, details of the plan and impetus for implementation were at the administrative and reading specialist level. The encouragement and approval of the projects came from—notably— the system's director of reading instruction, the principals, the assistant principals of instruction and the area executive directors. The reading specialist was instrumental in the inauguration of the Dual-Text program. The successes and gains, though, were obtained through the efforts of the classroom instructor. It is in the classroom where 'the rubber meets the road." To them, the true credit belongs. This is not to suggest that a reading program alone results in such gains.

There are many unaccounted for variables but this case study presentation will focus only effort (attempted) and results measured. Aware of the causal nature of various home, community and educational factors, then, we begin.

This article describes the three programs: a dual-text program geared to improving the reading skills of remedial-level freshmen students at an Atlanta suburban high school. The results of the effort produced measurable and significant reading level gains heretofore unknown to content area teachers. In addition, a project known as Skilled Comprehenders—a multiple-strategy, developmental reading instruction effort emphasizing the total language arts spectrum and utilizing interdisciplinary techniques as well as cooperative learning strategies was inaugurated to assist sophomores and the gains would be nearly as significant. Two high schools were involved with the pilot project Skilled Comprehenders.

Dual-Text 9th Grade Reading Program

A veteran reading specialist proposed to use her $500 Wal-Mart awards grant—she had been honored for previous achievement in reading instruction—to establish a dual text reading program designed for low-level readers. The decision came after

Grade Level Equivalent Gains By Ninth Graders After A Semester of Dual-Text** Instruction (Reading in the content area) Applied to Science and Social Science

(Average Positive Gain: increase over two grade levels)

Student	Pre-Instruction Reading GE	Post-Instruction Reading GE (after Dual-Text Instruction)
001	4.6	9.0
002	8.3*	9.0
003	7.0	9.9
004	6.4	8.5
005	5.5	9.0
006	8.5	8.0
007	7.8	8.7
008	3.9*	6.3
009	4.8	9.0
010	4.3	4.6
011	6.6	8.9
012	4.4	5.4
013	5.4	7.0
014	6.3	8.4
015	5.5	8.8
016	4.4	6.4
017	5.1	6.4
018	4.9*	7.5
019	4.3	8.7
020	8.8*	9.6
021	3.7	8.0
022	3.5	4.6
023	5.9	8.5
024	6.2	7.9
025	5.4	7.8
026	4.4	9.6
027-032	N/A	N/A

ITBS scores at the end of the eighth grade determined pre-instruction levels

**Indicates no ITBS score available and in these cases, a separate pre-test score was used*

The students were entering 9th graders and assigned to two teams of teachers who provided instruction using dual texts (basal text and an abridged version). Scores for 6 students were not available. Post-instruction scores are from the Nelson Reading Test. Test were administered by the teachers and scored through the reading specialist

***Globe-Fearon Pacemaker Series*

preliminary reading test results of the entering 9th grade class in 1998 showed nearly half the class was coming to school with reading levels below the 7th grade. The school administrators and instructional leaders were attempting to address the problem when her proposal was made.

The special texts—abridged versions of existing texts used for ninth graders in science and social sciences (government)—would be used to assist in bringing the grade level equivalent of the lowest readers in a classroom to at or near normal 9th grade reading levels. Two 9th grade teachers in adjacent classrooms implemented the project during the spring of the '98-99 school year. Each of the 15 students showed noteworthy reading level gains. The decision was made to widen the project.

During the next school term, in the second semester, the project was again implemented this time with two teams of two teachers each intended to serve some 32 students identified as reading significantly below grade level.

The reading specialist developed specific learning strategies for the teachers and presented them in person and individually for each teacher. A follow-up session was held several months into each project's time frame (one semester). After training in the use of the dual-text approach, these two sets of teachers shared the original working texts (15 in science and 8 in civics) and the teacher's resource material and implemented the program weekly for a group of 9th graders whose average reading level was below 6th grade (GE 5.7). (One of the students, originally identified as reading significantly below grade level, would later test to an 8th grade GE. This student was the only one to be considered reading on the 8th grade level when the dual-reading program began). A dedicated parent volunteer and continued support and encouragement by the reading specialist and reading instruction staff were notable and greatly appreciated aspects of the entire project.

The original two ninth-grade teachers shared their experience with dual-text teaching with the two new teachers in the same fields, social science and science. Both sets of teachers were in classrooms adjacent to one another and all were a part of a 9th grade instructional and curriculum arrangement whereby planning periods are aligned for daily planning—team and individual.

Each of the four teachers approached the dual-text teaching in their own way. Two engaged the volunteer as a direct instructor during class time with the lesson planned around the duality. A third utilized full class collaboration techniques while the fourth engaged in collaborative efforts but discovered much of his original time would be spent in vocabulary building (in context) and word-attack skills followed by writing instruction. Their comments concerning their experiences are part of this study. The parent volunteer was engaged weekly in two of the four classes and intermittently in the other two. I would also act as liaison between the reading specialist's classroom and the Academy teachers to provide proper scheduling, testing and test reporting as well as continued assistance as needed by the reading specialists for the teachers. The job of interfacing between the two areas allowed me to maintain communication among the teachers and the reading specialists and an opportunity to learn from both ends.

Beginning with only one student reading on the 8th grade level, by end of the semester, 16 of the 26 students were on 8th grade level or higher (10 students were at 8.5 GE or above). Average gain of student reading level grade equivalency was more than 2

years as measured on the Nelson Reading Test and compared to their 8th grade ITBS Total Reading scores

At our school, this 9th grade design—known as a Ninth-Grade Academy—houses four core area teachers (mathematics, language arts, social science and science) in one four-classroom modular building. The Ninth-Grade Academy –itself with a two-year history of dedication to the reading regiment, interdisciplinary and collaborative teaching techniques -- consists of 16 teachers, four teachers each in four modules. Each four-teacher team instructs as many of the same students as practicable. The teachers are engaged daily in joint planning individual classroom lesson planning. The dual-text program, then, added an additional cooperative and interdisciplinary effort geared to bring lower level readers on to the successful high school learning curve. The second planning session is vital to the dual text effort. The additional planning time, consideration of methodologies to be used and student needs require it.

The reading gains developed through these teachers by their students resulted in our principal opting for a complete dual text program to be implemented in the four core disciplines among the entire entering 9th grade population in the upcoming school year. That decision will be a major change agent across the board and their confidence, abilities and results are the central justifications for the new program.

Dual-Texts in the Classroom

In terms of experience with dual texts, the social science teacher in his second year with the program credited his familiarity with them as a distinct benefit. "I think (dual texts) help with students reading on the lower levels. (Dual texts) allowed me to get them more involved in the social studies class and with the information I was teaching because they could understand the book a little better. Plus, and most importantly, they got the one-on-one help from the parent volunteer and I think that is what really helped more than anything else."

In his class, the parent volunteer went to the edge of the room with 5 or 6 students at a time working with them through the lesson plan provided by the teacher.

"She was able to get them to read more often which increased their reading skills and knowledge of the core information. That was the main thing. They could get more out of the (abridged) text and they really enjoyed it once they got started in small groups. I was in the classroom teaching the rest of the class and she had five or 10 students and could lead them through the same chapters we were on."

Initially, he said, student reaction was negative to the dual text format and student misbehavior required him to intervene with the dual learners. "But after a couple of weeks, they got used to it and started to like it. It also helped that the parent volunteer knew assertive discipline techniques but really after that first couple of weeks, there was no problem.

"I think the key, too, was that I never wanted them (the lower level reading students) to get away from the basal text. I also didn't want to have them perceive themselves as not part of the class. Overall, the experience was beneficial to everyone.

His tests were teacher made and encompassed both the regular textbook and the dual text series.

The teacher said his recommendation would be for a paraprofessional or reading specialist to assist in the room during the dual text learning. He added that implementing the program places a premium on good classroom management.

The immaturity level of ninth graders is high—even the mature readers are not socially mature—and the prospect of delay or lack of teacher attention during dual text learning can create 'attention voids' for student misbehavior, he said. "The critical element is classroom management. If you don't have that, it's all lost."

Back to Basics?

His counterpart social science teacher encountered a different group of students and approached dual text learning in a more basic manner.

"At first the students felt embarrassed," said the teacher, using dual texts for the first time. "There was marked resistance. They would ask 'Why are you giving us these baby books' and remarks like that. I just told them this was a program to help them read better with greater comprehension of what they are reading and most of these students know they need to read better. I told them this was just another tool to that end.

This teacher chose to use his eight books with collaborative teaching techniques in groups of four. I tried to do peer teaching during the groups and we continued with that kind of group activity during the semester, too.

"I didn't really do what I wanted to do because we only had eight books but you got to do what you have to do. Also, the class I worked with had a low reading level on average and it wasn't long before I realized they lacked some of the fundamentals of reading itself. I think that is also what the dual text program makes a bit more obvious than a more sophisticated text.

"So before we got into using the books, we went back to fundamentals of syntax, grammar, spelling and work attack skills. They really didn't know how to syllabicate, to draw meaning from suffixes and prefixes or have a working knowledge of verb agreement, things like that. In fact, I think I probably spent half of just about every class on one type of basic skill or another.

"What really started helping was writing. We started out with trying to write sentences then paragraphs and I know you can fake it for a while but we soon got to short answers and essays and they can't carry one another then. They had to deal with their own knowledge and comprehension skills, then. They have to know what they have read to be able to write about it. We did at least two essays (in class) a week and I think that really expanded learning the dual text and the regular textbook.

"I know we went back and did some elementary things but as a teacher, you do what you have to do for your kids to do well. It's not only a reflection on them, but you, too. In the beginning, I almost had to *make* them do it. There was a lot of resistance and resentment and they let you know it. Here I was, a social science teacher dealing with grammar basics but we had to get through it and I think that is how they started learning some of the terms we have in our field. The presentation of material and vocabulary in history and government are very hard (for 14 or 15 year olds) and they had no way of breaking the words down—there was no way they were going to be able to read a book about them.

"We ended up doing a lot of word mapping skills. We used SQ3R every day. I presented Cornell note taking and I think the combination of those skills with the first

rush of the dual text then followed up in the regular text reached into their long-term memory. Note-taking and SQ3R: we used a lot of that."

In Science

Across the hall from the social science teacher was the science teacher also using the dual text format for the first time.

"The students responded well to (dual texts) because it allowed them to move at their own pace without feeling frustrated while it didn't hold back students using the regular textbook. Plus, it was nice having the parent volunteer in the room to work with individual students when they needed it. I rather enjoyed working with the dual texts in science.

"I could see improvement in students' attitude toward learning and in their reading ability. We had to share books and that was the difficult part. It was also difficult to get the books back and forth to the other module (science teacher) and keeping everything planned, lessons on track and all the things you have to do in your regular day.

"I tried to do some pairing but it was dependent upon what group (class) I was working with. If I had some higher level readers in a class, we would work in groups of three or four (each with a higher level reader) and that seemed to work. That was better than in just one or two groups where some of them would become overwhelmed, frustrated then totally disinterested.

" We worked on the dual text one day, then would move into the regular text—same subject area—the second day and I think that was useful in bringing the lower level reader up into the higher levels both of the book and in thinking. Dual text—an abridged version with the main points and the regular texts—gave them a chance to digest what they were learning so they could see the cross-referencing and the ways things tie together better.

I think reading in the content area is critically important. Let's face it, science is complicated and it has its own way of thinking and its own language sometimes and all of this—most of it, anyway, is new to someone just out of eighth-grade. I think it is critical for students to read, period! Reading in the content area instruction is one way to address content and still teach reading. We need to do both. I think the dual text program helps us with that."

Skilled Comprehenders

The National Research Council describes a skilled comprehender as one having "superior overall language comprehension, background knowledge that supports intricate use of the language and fluent word identification skills. They also possess superior metacognitive skills—i.e., the grasp quickly the purpose and meaning of any text and are more capable in their application skills." My thought was what better way to bring those language and word identification skills and fluency to a particular class than through our own faculty and other teachers (experts in their fields)? Likewise, I feel that by bringing in teachers from other disciplines to speak to any class emphasizes behaviors and thinking processes needed across the curriculum, promotes collaborative learning efforts and widens the scope and experience of students (and teachers).

In Skilled Comprehenders, one high school involved a sophomore reading instruction class. The other high school class, a sophomore world history class, was also

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the site of the dual-text program. Interdisciplinary language arts skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking), collaborative instructional strategies and modeling were key elements of Skilled Comprehenders at both schools. Interdisciplinary engagement included 'guest speakers' from other curriculum departments within each school (teachers who volunteered to give lectures in their field and also volunteered to travel to the other school as 'guest speakers'). I began attempting to set up the pilot project during the spring semester of the school year in hopes of implementing it in the fall-or at latest, the second semester of the just-ended year. I had hoped to compare in the content area application with general reading skills and as it turned out, we nearly succeeded. At least the project was tried in both classes albeit over varying lengths of time, at different times and involving different measuring instruments.

The content area component was the world history class with average reading levels at about 6th grade. The reading class effort at a second high school was an application of reading skills instruction in a class comprised of sophomores with a range of reading levels with an average at about 7th grade. This third program measured individual gains in reading abilities and focused on application of reading and study skills.

Reading Skills Class: Measurement and Classroom Application

A 10-year veteran teacher was assigned a reading skills class comprised of 20 sophomores. 16 of the students would be present from start to finish. Of the 16, three were LEP (students with limited English proficiency). Average reading level of the class was sixth grade. These 16 students comprise the effort's measurements. It was the first reading skills class taught by the instructor who holds a bachelor's degree in history and a master's in education and is a qualified school administrator.

After several discussions, it was agreed that the teacher would constantly encourage the students to use the reading and study skills that would form the basis of the class in their other classes *and* he would monitor the report cards of the students in their three other core courses, i.e. each student took the reading skills class and three other courses for credit. Second, the Comprehension Grade Equivalent on the Gates-MacGinitie (Level 7-9: Forms K & L) reading test would be an additional measurement on the belief that comprehension increases as student experiences and skills increase. The testing would be administered by the teacher and scored through the reading specialist. Third, the teacher would maintain an anecdotal record for the class and a notebook of classroom observations and samples as well as references to materials and experiences. Lastly, and perhaps most critically, the teacher agreed to the application of the administrator's selected strategies and not the teacher's selected manner of teaching. It was this agreement, on the basis that students need to make some of their own selections (ref.: Learning Styles) that formed the platform for classroom and lesson planning that was to follow. My role was to demonstrate how to do it. His role was to implement. The teacher's summarized experiences follow later in this paper.

At the close of the semester, reading comprehension increased to more than 7th grade 7th month from a September average of nearly 7th grade (6.95 GE). The range was from about 3rd grade to post-high school. In terms of academic performance, as measured by tracking failing grades, the number of failing grades at the first six weeks mark

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dropped by two-thirds by the end of the semester (from 18 to 6) and the number of near-failing D grades was halved (from 9 to 4).

One additional by-product of this class was the consideration of two key questions from the recent NAEP study of student behaviors. I was interested if the teacher could determine attitudes in his class on these national survey results:

Question 1: My friends make fun of people who try to do well.

Question 2: How important is it to do well on reading tests?

(On the first issue: "In our class, this did not happen. There was beginning reluctance, even resentment, about being in a reading class but that was probably attributable more to 'unmasking' deficiencies than anything else, I don't know. Reading tests can be kind of intimidating to certain students. It --ridicule of success or achievement-- just never arose in any form and I did not detect it during the semester. On the second issue, I felt that all the students wanted to do as well as they could. They seemed to really be trying. On the post-test, for whatever reason, only one person stated he didn't care and would mark the answer sheet randomly. At the beginning of the course and during the first six weeks or so, there were several students who were uncomfortable with reading and I would say were very self-conscious and reluctant to participate. That evaporated as we moved into the course.")

Both questions pose important aspects of reading instruction both for teachers and administrators who operate in a given school culture.

It is worth noting that none of the strategies were directed at improving a single score or grade in a particular discipline but in academic success as a whole. At this age and level, a student's selection of techniques might best be determined by a student's own needs (Strickland, 1999).

The diversity of the students, their different classes and their specific needs precluded gearing the approach to one class or another. Hence, the Skilled Comprehender approach: using varied techniques and offered to mainstream students in general education classes. The teacher would walk students through the strategies, model how to accomplish tasks, demonstrate how thinking progresses, how to listen, speak, write and read for different purposes and provide lessons to broaden both detailed and global experiences of the students in a learning environment. My role as administrator was to present, model and explain strategies for the teacher who would, in turn, use the strategies with their students.

From the initial discussions, the teacher and I wanted to develop and improve critical reading skills by trying to offer appropriate strategies for each learner on the assumption that every child learns in his or her own way. A package of strategies was devised to incorporate the language arts spectrum.

It was decided that in the four-month course, the teacher would become as experienced as possible (repeated applications) in presenting the learning and reading strategies. The basics of inter-disciplinary activities, collaborative learning techniques and reading in the content areas were to be guideposts of the activities and strategies.

The one-semester course presented its own difficulties for both of us. First, we were on different campuses during the school day. My role as trainer was limited to one face-to-face session thereafter to extensive telephone communication. Practice sessions—discussions about strategies and noting individual student needs—required extensive telephone time nearly every day, especially in the beginning. Courier delivered written

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Skilled Comprehenders

Comparison of reading comprehension grade level equivalents after one semester

Student	Comp GE Sept.*	Comp GE Jan.**
001	9.5	10.2
002	2.7	5.2
003	5.5	4.5
004	9.1	14phs
005	4.5	3.2
006	2.4	2.7
007	4.3	4.5
008	4.3	4.5
009	5.2	3.7
010	7.1	6.3
011	11.5	***
012	8.4	14phs
013	14phs	14phs
014	11.5	14phs
015	5.5	3.2
016	5.7	4.5

*September 13: Gates-MacGinitie (Level 7-9) Form K, Avg.: 6.95 Comp. GE
**January 13: Gates-MacGinitie (Level 7-9) Form L; Avg.: 7.7 Comp. GE
***score unaccounted
phs: post high school level. The numerical rating of 14 is the author's to give a numerical value to the phs level.

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Skilled Comprehenders

Monitoring Academic Performance During A One-Semester Reading Skills Class

Academic Performance	Startup (Week 1-6)	Comfort Zone (Week 7-12)	Final Application (Week 13-18)
No. of Failing Grades (F)	18	11	6
No. of Grades of 70 (D)*	9	0	4

*A score of 69 or below = failing grade. A score of 70 = D. Score of 71 or higher either C, B or A. Scale is the school system's.
N.B.: Student grades were recorded each six-week period. Each student was required to take three additional courses during the semester, a total of 48 maximum grades. Grade for the reading course was not counted. Students: 16.

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correspondence. Once the school year began, one session was face-to-face. Both of us knew going in we would have this difficulty. In fact, due to surgery, we had no communication from Thanksgiving through January. The semester ended in early January. Also, the pre-test—originally planned for August—was delayed until mid-September, a full 30 days into the course.

Nevertheless, the teacher and I reviewed the reading and comprehension strategies together referencing the hypothesis that if the students can be given choices of learning strategies, respond in their own way, experience success in that effort then they might be better equipped to transfer that learning into their core classes. The approach, then, was not remedial but developmental. In other words, a "use it or lose it" approach. Once past knowledge acquisition, the teacher would make every effort to engage the students in the higher levels of thinking, reading, speaking. Teacher modeling would be an integral and critical part of the skills presentation to the student.

The project was divided into three six-week periods: *startup* (which would include a reading test), *comfort-zone* that would be a period of intense study skill and reading strategy application whereby students "zone in" on what is working for them and *skills application*—the final six weeks of the 18-week period. I think, at times, too many teachers and even high school and college students view these strategies as elementary or only for the young or deficient readers. But they are learning strategies that are good for life. We wanted to see if we could get students to adopt what worked for them and somehow come up with a measurement about their effort. We can't get time back. Our principal often says: " The only time we have is the time we have left."
The greater one's store of knowledge, the greater one's choices of how to use it.

It should be noted here that the teacher's initial reading test was intended to provide him with a current grade-level equivalent of the students' reading abilities. It would have been unusual to gear a one-semester course for measurement of such a variable. However, for his own purposes and to attempt to validate his observations, the teacher asked for a final reading test. In fact, a reading level test was administered at the closing of the course during the school's Final Exam days both for the teacher's information and to acquire data on hoped-for comprehension gains. (One section of the test measures Comprehension Grade Equivalents in addition to vocabulary. Both are combined to form a Total Reading Grade Level Equivalent). We would use the Comprehension Grade Equivalent data due to the shortness of time involved.

The initial six-week period—the beginning of the school year—saw a number of children move through the class due to schedule changes. The 16 students monitored through the semester were in the class at the beginning and at the end.

Strategies

The effort of the first six weeks was to involve the students in as many thinking skills as could be developed in that short time frame. We were looking for the 'hook' of interest in each child. We knew the first six weeks to be a time of excitement and commitment on the part of students. They arrive at school ready for a successful year and are generally eager to achieve. We wanted to capitalize on that excitement and momentum even at the risk of overwhelming them—and time would prove that such an outpouring seemed to work in the student's favor. Seizing on the teacher's zeal, the students (in the teacher's words) soon dropped their initial reluctance and resistance to "reading and took ownership of the class. I was amazed."

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The following reading strategies were utilized—

After the introduction of the class, reading strategies would include read aloud, think aloud, paired reading, guided reading, DRTA, silent reading, paraphrasing (verbally) and regular vocabulary- in-context exercises and discussions. The beginning of the course included time management and organizational skills (teacher modeled), Cornell note taking method (modeled and used throughout the 18 weeks), and in-class program for individual accountability in cooperative learning sessions (modeled and used throughout the semester). Before the Labor Day holiday, we developed a lesson for following instructions through visualization and moved to visualization of a critical reading exercise (Red Badge of Courage) coupled with the study technique SQ3R. These study skills would be repeatedly presented throughout the semester.

Use of the media center's resources, public speaking, critical reading strategies and techniques for taking the PSAT were also goals of the class format. After returning from Labor Day Holiday, the teacher then began a four-week series of critical readings and vocabulary building exercises. Emphasis began on using skills required of other disciplines. Content readings included literature, science, and history. Use of visual media presentations would later include plays *(Romeo and Juliet)* and stage presentations (*Our Town* –the movie--with students following *Our Town*—the original play--was also presented to give students an opportunity to evaluate differing techniques and editing of producer compared to writer).

The writing elements of the first six weeks involved exercises and strategies in paraphrasing and as the course moved along, sentence construction and essay development. The instructor wrote on the board as the students followed his Thinking Aloud to model the exercises. A special lesson involved the chairman of the English Department who agreed to present a one-hour session on types of sentence construction and rationale of their use to the students. Said the teacher, "It was an ultra-successful lesson. The students realized then that they did not have to rely on how they spoke for the written word. They could shape new ideas and get across their message in a much more mature fashion. After this lesson and several practice sessions the writing improved remarkably." Another lesson featured a literature expert from the other high school as guest lecturer. The lesson was a listening, note taking and writing activity. That teacher's experiences are part of this report. Additional strategies followed included Outlining and lesson in Writing-Reading-Rewriting.

The Comfort Zone period was the second six weeks highlighted with more intense practice and individualized attempts to encourage each student's success. The Skills Application period—leading to a 'final exam'—placed emphasis on continuing to apply learning skills across the curriculum.

Teacher observations

"As the semester moved along, they (students) felt more comfortable with the methods that were used and so did I. I think I am a better teacher for having been exposed to so many methods of trying to reach students. I have used those methods in my other classes with successes there, too.

"(Students) became less reluctant to do things. At the beginning they were very reluctant and they resented doing some of the methods but they soon became comfortable with them—and with each other. They were skeptical about reading and they started stepping outside their familiar zones because they had to expose themselves to their

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weaknesses. The cooperative learning techniques and the added emphasis on using skills in their other classes made them participators. They had to participate and they knew they couldn't just sit there and avoid interaction.

"I think the interaction, the cooperative learning strategies were critical to their behaviors about reading. They started linking what we were doing to their other classes and subjects and it was obvious to them they were having success.

"I could see an improvement in their writing skills, their continuity and clearness of thought in expression of their views during the classroom discussion periods. They could delve into characters in literature, their discussions of life around them was more mature and sophisticated and their vocabulary was truly more refined.

"The writing exercises did take a little more time. After the two language speakers—one in literature and the other in actual sentence formation—they realized they could not write they way they talked with its teen slang and incomplete sentences, improper syntax, etc. and they started attempting to write in complete thoughts. I think this was also critical for their listening skills development. All of this started showing up in the increase of quality of work whether it was short answer, essays or paraphrasing. We never stopped the Cornell note taking and every day we used SQ3R for something and I believe that kept things improving as well.

"We used SQ3R nearly every day until everyone was comfortable in taking a paragraph in and of itself and pulling from it what they needed. I had known of this technique for a long time but I had never insisted it be used all the time. After awhile, it was second nature to them. So was SQ3R. Now, when they read something they don't quite understand instead of just turning aside they take the technique—or one of the other techniques—and it helps them grasp more fully what they area reading.

"It got to where they were not only comprehending what was written but I could see Bloom's taxonomy at work right before my eyes. At the end they were evaluating—determining whether they agreed or disagreed with what they were reading and why. They were moving right through analysis, comparing, synthesizing then evaluating. In short, I thought the techniques got them past the general knowledge level and into the higher levels of thinking in a hurry.

"Toward the end of the semester, they were conscious of their grades in other classes to the point they would discuss study skills, ways approaching problems and even show me some of their good results. What started out as dragging them into the reading techniques ended up with, I guess, what I would say was student ownership of the class. In September I would have to coax and encourage and by November they were arriving prepared well enough to know exactly what was expected of them and why and cooperation was one of the hallmarks of this group. It was a great experience for me and I think they all learned something about themselves as well.

"There were several students who showed remarkable improvements in the academic area. One student arrived in August refusing to read aloud by November the same student was leading discussions and reading aloud with excellent diction, inflection and paraphrasing. I think a lot of that confidence came from our class and many of the speaking activities we had coupled with certain Read Alouds. There's something else to know, too, about that student: she had a great deal of home support for the reading class. I know her parents played a major role in her gains. Incidentally, she tested in September at a reading level of 7th grade and took a reading test in January—a more difficult test, I

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thought—and rated at the post-high school level in total grade equivalent. We had some measurable gains with others, too, as I'm sure you will point out in the chart but the growth I saw in their confidence, their positive changes in attitudes and behaviors toward learning, reading and each other and the increased sophistication of their work and just their general desire to do well was the real benefit, I think.

Reading in the Content Area: Measurement and Application

"If they never see the 'good' stuff (higher level learning), then how do they develop the behavior that is geared to meeting greater expectations? Where do the class leaders, the achievers and successful students – those who are so important to demonstrate proper behaviors in any group--come from? You will always be stuck with the results of low expectations—misbehavior, resentment, resistance, poor performance and the other bricks that form walls of non-learning and disinterest." – a Missouri teacher of 27 years experience commenting on Skilled Comprehenders having visiting 'guest lecturers' in the classroom.

A sophomore general education world history class utilized the Skilled Comprehenders approachj during most of the school year (pre-test in November with a post-test in May). The Nelson Reading Test was used to determine grade equivalent total reading levels. The teacher administered the test with scoring by the reading specialist. Average positive gain in reading level would be nearly two years. I think the classroom teacher felt the imposition of Skilled Comprehenders and it took time for the strategies to work their way into his class, longer than a reading class, but we both anticipated that. It was important that he build the reading activities into the curriculum on a daily basis.

A selection of reading, critical comprehension and study skills were presented during the class. Skilled Comprehenders is dependent upon the instructor's agreement to offer the varied strategies (regardless of his own methods or approach to learning). The entire approach is linkage: linking the disciplines, linking the aspects of the language arts (listening, speaking, writing, reading). Support strategies that involve guest speakers play a key role in expanding the student's own classroom experiences. The activities reinforce interdisciplinary strategies and collaborative learning techniques.

Guest speakers for this class included a colleague and expert in history presenting the topic "Where do we get these ideas?" The chairman of the science department agreed to be a guest lecturer ("Scientific developments and its links to history"). He brought with him a historical perspective on science and a blood-typing activity that kept the students enthralled and active. It was the first time the class had ever heard him speak at all and several days afterward he reported one student requesting to be scheduled to take his advanced chemistry course. A master English teacher presented a walk-through of grammar, syntax and sentence construction applied to answering short answers and essays in world history.

A skim-scan-scour lesson plan is provided in this study as an example of a strategy dealing with difficult material. He noted, "it will take planning and practice at first, but it is useful to model this type of academic skill to the students." He did.

Other strategies included daily use of graphic organizers, illustrating vocabulary activities (art, diagrams, cartoons), on-going vocabulary development exercises, Cornell note taking, SQ3R repeatedly and critical reading strategies.

Skilled Comprehenders

Reading Level Gains by 10th Grade Students Following Reading in the Content Area and Language Arts Instruction in a Social Studies Classroom

Average Grade Equivalent gain of two grade levels (1.957)

Student	November GE Pre-Test	May GE Post-Test
001	6.7	6.1
002	8.9	10.6
003	5.9	8.2
004	N/A^	6.5
005	7.4	10.9
006	7.0	7.4
007	N/A*	7.4
008	4.1	8.6
009	5.9	10.9
010	5.6	8.0
011	N/A^	6.8
012	7.2	N/A**
013	7.2	10.3
014	N/A	7.6
015	8.8	10.6

Nelson Reading Tests (Forms 1,2) were used as both pre-test and post-test. Pre-test administered in early November with the post-test administered in mid-May of the following semester. Teacher administered the tests that were scored and results reported by the Reading Specialists.

**entered class in second semester.*

***left class in second semester.*

^did not complete pre-test.

This teacher also presented several strategies on silent reading. I forewarned the teacher about potential reaction to this strategy. The initial reaction of the students to silent reading was..."shock. They said I was supposed to tell them what they need to know. They had apparently never read content in class silently (and then been asked to re-tell and paraphrase) before. It was amusing but they caught on." Silent reading was presented several more times during the school year. Purpose of silent reading was to remove any oral reading constraints, allow the students personalized time to read at their own pace and in their own way, then discuss the various aspects of the material among themselves.

The teacher, who received his doctorate in his field during the school year, said that at the beginning (of the year), he was not clear "where all this was leading early in the process. I think the classroom teacher felt the imposition of Skilled Comprehenders and it took time for the strategies to work their way into his class, longer than a reading class, but we both anticipated that. It was important that he build the reading activities into the curriculum on a daily basis. He was never uncooperative and was most gracious in handling my frequent 'nips' at his time and understanding the time and duty constraints we both faced.

As the school year ended, I asked him to write down some of his observations about the pilot project:

"The variety of activities seemed analogous to a 'shotgun approach' where you try lots of different things in hopes that something will work and then you have the difficulty of determining the effectives of the various activities." He suggested having teachers focus on two or three strategies to use on a regular basis but the pilot project's intention is to allow the students to select from the strategies available. We have not had a full discussion on his suggestions.

He also suggested regular meetings, planning sessions and mutual encouragement among instructors to share their experiences and techniques for bringing reading in the content area a natural part of the curriculum. (I'll buy that!)

Skilled Comprehenders: Views from presenters

Dr. L., a 27-year teaching veteran and Ph.D. in Literature

"During the first semester, Mr. Marnell came to me and said, 'Dr. L., I want you to give a lecture to Dr. C.'s class on the European Renaissance.'" He continued talking but I really didn't hear him because I was thinking: 'What! How can I fit this in to everything else I have to do! Help!!"

"I stood there shaking my head 'yes', trying to catch up with what he was saying. I finally realized two things—one, he wasn't giving me a choice and two, the program really did sound exciting.

"Over the next few weeks, I thought about my high school and college students and how much difficulty they were having in moving beyond simple comprehension of whatever they were reading. How few of them made the connection between and among other disciplines and real-life experiences. How dull and uninteresting many of them felt the subject matter presented to them because they could not see any linkage between the classroom and real life. How unprepared and uninspired most of my students were.

"As I read over my lecture notes to prepare for what I thought would be my only lecture, little seeds of acceptance and doubt found fertile ground in my mind. I wasn't

sure these young people in Dr. C.'s class were ready for a lecture that demanded critically listening and responding orally and in writing on a much high level than they had ever experienced. Could they see and understand the way in which writers were influenced by the historical, social, political and economic events of their time? More importantly, could they link that with today's world and articulate it in oral and written forms? But if the program did work, what a wonderful head start for these young people!

"I had an absolute blast in Dr. C.'s class. The students were so well prepared. THEY LISTENED, THEY TOOK NOTES, AND THEY ASKED INTELLIGENT QUESTIONS, THEY MADE CONNECTIONS! (Capitalization is Dr. L.'s). I had an epiphany while lecturing. Quite often instruction takes place, but learning doesn't. Learning was taking place that day.

"Within the lecture I had given the answers to all but one question in the evaluation (guest lecturers bring their own evaluation forms as part of the written portion of their appearance). When Dr. C. gave that test, the students knew exactly what answer I had left out. It was wonderful. They ALL had listened to carefully, and had taken such good notes that it was easy for them to do well.

"By that time, I was a believer. When Mr. Marnell requested I (present at the other school), I was eager to do so. Once again, the students were well prepared. I lectured on the European Renaissance but I had a longer period of time with them, so I was able to include the music and art of the time as well as the important historical, social, economic and political events of that time.

"I attempted to show how the common people lived out their lives. After the lecture, the students did a group activity. Ballads were a very popular way for the people to comment on their lives during the Renaissance. The group assignment was for students to write a ballad reflecting their lives and then to perform them. They could sing, rap or recite the ballads. It was amazing what they came up with. The next day, the teacher gave them the objective test and he told me they did very well on it.

"By the time I returned (to her home school), I had so many ideas swirling around in my head, I just couldn't wait to talk to Mr. Marnell. I was so excited about the program, I just chattered away and Mr. Marnell just stood there with an 'I told you so' look on his face, as if this was the response he had expected from me all along.

"I did one more lecture for Dr. C.'s class second semester on the Industrial Revolution and its impact on literature, especially non-fiction writers. Once again, same results.

"By the way, both teachers took notes during my lectures. This was a wonderful way to demonstrate the importance of note taking to the students. Quite often, by modeling a skill we touch students in a special way.

"By this time, I really understood what "Skilled Comprehenders" meant. It wasn't just reading instruction or comprehension, although that is a vital part of anyone's life in the 21st century. What it really means is that an individual has enough knowledge, strategies, skills and experiences to be a life long learner; a person who can and will accept the challenges of the a century in which fundamental changes will alter the way in which we all live out our lives.

"Connections and linkage between and among the disciplines must take place in order for civilization to continue. When students take ownership for their own learning,

the process begins. Socialization, civility, sensitivity, all will become important to an individual who sees his or her role in the world as a positive one."

Mr. F., English Department Chairman (Writing Skills in the Reading Class)

"I think it was a total worthwhile for everybody. Anytime you go into a situation where you are trying to help people and they are susceptible e to it there is reward all the way around. It (my presentation) was new and different. It's like bringing new acts into a show. They are caught up with a lead teacher every day and they do things differently They were prepared and received me well. I was really surprised. I didn't expect them to clap at the end. Very seldom when I make presentations do students clap. And some of the kids there after would see me in the hall and they remembered me. They identified me. They knew my name and what I did. I was human and did things differently.

"I have no reservation about teaching reading in the content area and it doesn't matter which area: chemistry, math, sociology. It doesn't matter. When I started to teach advanced placement several years ago, we found out what (strategy) was good for one was good for all. If it's a good strategy, it's good and it works. I teach my advanced and general classes the same way. The speed may vary. That's probably the only key difference.

"After I made my presentation, I asked the teacher if he thought the kids would do better in the long term or the short term and he answered they got better the *next day*. If one kid did better the next day, that's good enough for me. When he mentioned students in plural form, well, I thought then maybe we made a little dent in the game.

" I approached my presentation as a writer. That is the bottom line to what I was trying to present. I had been working with ESOL kids in preparation for the Georgia Writing Test and I thought what we could present could make a difference." (This teacher tutored 20 ESOL students in preparation for the test. All passed.)

Positive comments and individual verbal feedback were also reported from the history teacher, science teacher and English instructor who presented in Skilled Comprehenders.

An administrator's advisory: choose those who commit. Not all are amenable to Skilled Comprehenders. They may be too busy with their own classes, lives or interests for what they feel is the added pressure of such a task. . Some will say 'no' from the beginning; others may dismiss the approach out of hand. Still others accept but scheduling may keep them from participating. One rule was followed: they had an out. They could say no. (Yes, Dr. L. could have turned it down). So, too, could the teachers and other speakers. The point is, they didn't.

Expansion of the Program?

Skilled Comprehenders was applied in one general education classroom. I gave demonstrations of its techniques in both a special education classroom and a classroom of advanced Latin students. We know the strategies work and there is now a small nucleus of experienced teachers capable and willing to reach out to their students with new techniques—and all of the teachers are veteran educators, most with advanced degrees.

At this writing, it would be worthwhile—I believe—to attempt Skilled Comprehenders for a class through its curriculum bringing metacognition techniques to

every level of reader and learner in a manner which allows them to select the most successful working methods by which they can raise their own learning, their confidence and self-esteem and potentially their future contributions to society. I am aware of the time involved in such planning and the numerous challenges along the way in terms of administration and instructional leadership. It is the positive acceptance of applying various learning strategies (on the part of teachers and students) that will indicate the continued growth of Skilled Comprehenders as a learning device. "Learning to learn" is founded upon intrinsic motivation. Each student, hopefully, can find their own wellspring of discovery.—E.R.M. Summer 2000.

E.R. Marnell is assistant principal of Southwest DeKalb High School, DeKalb County Schools, Decatur, Ga.

The Ninth Grade Academy Concept

The stated rationale at the beginning of its implementation
At the beginning of the 1998-1999 school year.

Ninth Grade Academy

The goal of the Ninth Grade Academy is to provide ninth grade students with a smooth transition from middle school to high school. To do this, the Academy will provide students with a supportive climate in which to develop academically, socially, and emotionally and will give them an opportunity to build positive relationships with not only their peers but also the adults with whom they come in contact. Through positive interactions with others, the students are expected to have fewer attendance and discipline problems and more academic success.

The Instructional Program. Ninth Grade Academy students will be required to take English, mathematics, science, social studies, physical education/health, and an elective. They will be assigned to teams. Each student team will be served by an instructional team consisting of a teacher from each of the core subjects; in some schools, an electives teacher will also serve on the team. Four periods of the school day will be blocked for the core subjects, allowing teachers to team teach, provide interdisciplinary approaches to instruction, and use flexible scheduling as needed to ensure the most effective use of instructional time. An integral part of the Academy program will be the teaching of self-discipline, time management, organization, and study skills throughout all subject areas. Additionally, since reading skills are essential for high school success, students entering ninth grade reading below grade level will be required to take Personalized Reading, an individualized reading course, as their elective. Other electives will be available for students who will not be registered for reading.

The Instructional Staff. Teachers for the Academy will be carefully selected. First, they must be teachers who understand and enjoy teaching younger high school students (14 and 15 year olds) and who have an interest in providing those students with a bridge between eighth and tenth grades. Academy teachers must have a positive attitude and believe that all students can succeed, even though not in the same way or at the same rate. The teachers must not be afraid to venture out and try new things, being creative, innovative, and flexible in the use of a variety of instructional strategies and evaluation techniques and in their approach to discipline. They must be strong in content. They must be team players, for the whole concept of the Academy is built upon interdisciplinary planning and teaching; each team of teachers will work as a unit and will meet daily to plan, problem-solve, and share. Finally, the Academy staff must be able to communicate well with parents and the community, as keeping parents abreast of student progress will be fundamental. Some schools may choose to have a ninth grade administrator and/or counselor to serve only the Academy.

The Student Teams. Each team will consist of four groups of up to 28 students each (a maximum of 112 students per team). The number of teams per school will be determined by grade level enrollment. Students at different instructional levels will be served on each team; for example, one team may consist of one high achieving group and three average achieving groups. In some classes, the students will be heterogeneously grouped, but the needs of all students will be addressed regardless of group assignment.

The Ninth Grade Academy will provide students with meaningful experiences which will enhance student achievement by giving students the wherewithal to be successful in the high school setting. Expectations of students will be high, but committed, dedicated teachers will provide students with everything needed to meet the challenge.

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Ninth Grade Academy

Beginning the emphasis on Reading in the Content Area

The Academy concept's first year

READING IN THE CONTENT AREA INSERVICE
TEACHERS OF THE NINTH GRADE ACADEMY
SOUTHWEST DEKALB HIGH SCHOOL
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30,1998

Presenter: Elizabeth Filliat, Reading Dept. Chairperson

I. DETERMINING CORRECT READING INSTRUCTIONAL LEVEL FOR EACH STUDENT

A. How to use results of the 8th grade ITBS scores and the 9th grade Nelson/Nelson Denny Reading Test scores.

B. * Recognizing the wide range of reading levels within each class room
* Causes of reading problems
* Diagnoses of the student's ability to handle the textbook: The CLOZE TEST

II. TEACHING VOCABULARY SKILLS IN CORE CONTENT AREAS

A. Lecture on word attack skills including phonics, syllabication, prefixes, roots, suffixes

B. Teachers will build a personal curriculum etymology. They will share results with the class through demonstration of two curriculum words which use the complied etymology.

C. Lecture on vocabulary development skills

D. In small groups teachers will practice the CD (Concept of Definition) Map by Robert Schwartz. They will use posters provided to demonstrate the teaching of one new curriculum vocabulary word through the CD map technique. They will share their small posters with the class.

E. Individual teachers will demonstrate how to teach the meaning of an unknown word through context clues to the class.

III. TEACHING COMPREHENSION SKILLS IN CORE CONTENT AREAS

A. Lecture on comprehension skills including prereading, reading for a purpose, active reading techniques, SQ3R, visualizing, the directed reading lesson, paraphrasing, recognizing key words, transitional words

B. Lecture on graphic organizers and reading inventories

C. Additional information on paraphrasing

D. Additional information on teaching critical thinking skills in the reading process (**Bloom's Taxonomy**)

E. Small groups will role play the student and teacher roles as they demonstrate to one another how to effectively teach/learn reading comprehension skills, utilizing especially SQ3R, paraphrasing, directed reading lesson techniques

IV. ORDERING EASIER TO READ TEXTBOOKS FOR SCIENCE AND SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSES

A. Paraprofessional and parental support

B. Peer teaching

V. ADDENDUM TO INSERVICE

A. Using visual aids, Mrs. Filliat will demonstrate how sentence structure can be broken into smaller component units for greater understanding of sentence meaning. This technique is especially useful with test taking comprehension skills.

B. Lecture on study skills, such as listening skills, notetaking skills, and memory skills, which significantly effect reading comprehension skills.

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Second In-Service for Teachers of Dual-Text instruction.

Presented by our former reading specialist (now a consultant) who began the program. I will present the contents and additional comments of the teachers during the pre-planning of early August

Reading In Content Areas Workshop

Southwest Dekalb High School

June 12, 2000

Instructor: Elizabeth H. Filliat

9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

Lecture by Mrs. Filliat on Reading Strategies To Improve Students' Reading Scores Through The Use of Dual Textbooks and Peer Teaching in Classes

12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

Groups Are Formed To Develop Reading strategies specifically for Chapter 24 in Fearon's <u>American Government</u>

Group 1 - pp. 279 - 282

Group 2 - pp. 282 - 285

Group 3 - pp. 286 - 290

Group 4 pp. 291 - 293

→ Groups will use SQ3R, Vocabulary, Comprehension Strategies with textbooks, worksheets.

→ Groups will be composed of (1) a "teacher" (2) a "student" who reads on 3rd grade level (3) a "student" who reads on 6th grade level. (4) a "student" who reads on 9th grade level (5) a "student" on 12th grade reading.

1:30 - 2:30

GROUP PRESENTATIONS TO WHOLE CLASS

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Each Teacher
Brings A Toolbox of
Strategies to
The Classroom.

Project:
Skilled Comprehenders...

Southwest DeKalb High School
E.R. Marnell, assistant principal

...LETS TEACHERS BRING ALL THE TOOLS!

Skilled Comprehenders and its emphasis on language arts skills across the curriculum

Incorporating our county's statement of support of the instruction of reading

Pilot Project: Skilled Comprehenders

What High School Teachers Need to Know About Teaching Reading:

The goal of EVERY teacher is IMPROVED STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT. Therefore, every teacher is actually a READING TEACHER for the courses which each teaches. Content-area teachers strive to help students learn and master the subject matter of their courses. In doing so, teachers must utilize skills and strategies which encourage and enhance the reading/learning process. In addition to content-specific skills, teachers must also incorporate reading strategies that will further the students' understanding and mastery of the course content.

Teaching reading is teaching students to process the written language in much the same manner as we teach them to process the spoken word. Written and spoken language interact, enhancing each other. However, the process of understanding and using the written word does involve, initially, different physiological and mental processes which most high school students have mastered. However, new words and language structure require instructional assistance.

Teaching the reading of a content area involves teaching the students the language and thinking processes of the content area using the syntax, concepts, and language of the content area to do so.

Content/reading teachers use appropriate strategies to introduce, develop, and maintain facility with the vocabulary concepts of the specific content area.

Content/reading teachers use various strategies to help students develop text comprehension skills such as:

a. Pre-reading strategies including surveying the structure of the book, chapter, etc.
b. DRTA
c. Multi-level reading guides
d. Graphic organizers
e. Multiple levels of critical thinking and questioning skills (Bloom/Barrett taxonomies)
f. Annotation
g. SQ3R

Content/reading teachers help students acquire subject-appropriate study skills such as:

a. Summarizing information
b. Taking notes (Cornell method)
c. Listening skills
d. SQ3R (or similar method)

Content/reading teachers help students acquire good test-taking skills including:

a. Preparation for different types of questions
b. Preparation for different types of tests

Skilled Comprehenders

What is a good listener/bad listener?
What behaviors and ways of thinking
Are needed to be a 'good listener'.

A lesson activity in preparation for
guest lecturers and for application throughout
the student's life.

Poor Listeners

- Tunes out uninteresting topics
- Does not listen if delivery of material is poor
- Tends to enter into argument with the lecturer or in their own head
- Listens for facts
- Is busy trying to get everything down while taking notes
- Shows no energy output, fakes attention
- Is distracted easily
- Resists difficult expository material, seeks light, recreational material
- Reacts to emotional words
- Tends to daydream with slow speakers

Good Listeners

- ✓ Always finds something of interest (seizes opportunities)
- ✓ Is concerned about content; skips over delivery erros
- ✓ Doesn't judge until comprehension is complete
- ✓ Listens for central themes, ideas
- ✓ Adjusts to topic and changes note taking style to suit the material being presented
- ✓ Works hard; exhibits alertness
- ✓ Fights or avoids distractions; tolerates bad habits in others, knows how to concentrate
- ✓ Uses heavier material as exercise for the mind
- ✓ Interprets emotional words; does not get 'hung up' on them
- ✓ Challenges, anticipates, mentally summarizes, weighs the evidence, listens 'between the lines' to tone and voice

From 'Study Skills' presented by Middlesex Community-Technical College, Middletown, CT

Skilled Comprehenders

Sample Lesson Plan

Developed for reading in the content area instruction for the world history class
Demonstrated for the teacher who then presented the strategy

Linkage of the key terms is directed to relevance for the student. The lesson was at or near the time of a visiting instructor's presentation on the historical development of current political, social, economic and religious thought.

Skilled Comprehenders: Lesson plan for A 'guest lecturer'

The volunteer instructors were to utilize each of the Language arts skills—listening, speaking, writing, reading—through activities they brought To the classroom

Day /Lesson Sheet
Day Three
Unit Two
Chapters 4--9
"The Flowering of Civilizations"
Emphasis: Listening, Speaking, and Writing skills.
Linkage Lecturer Mr. Jim Bailey, SWD.

Unit Two centers on the development of ideas that have continued through time to influence our lives today. Mr. Jim Bailey, history instructor, presents these ideas and their development through the centuries illustrating many of the lessons presented in the text. His 'guest lecturer' experience will include a Q& A session with the students and he will leave with the instructor of the course a series of open-ended questions which the students will answer in writing practicing proper sentence construction, grammar as well as development of their own ideas.

Students will take notes during Mr. Bailey's presentation and the instructor will model notetaking for them ... sharing with them at the end of the presentation what he felt was note worthy. Using their notes only, and each other, students will formulate their responses to Mr. Bailey's questions for presentation to Mr. Cozens as a graded exercise. Each student will write their own paper but all may draw upon their own notes and compare theirs with the notes and observations of others.

The close of the lesson will introduce the students to the chapters in a way that allows them to first become familiar with the material itself ... a 'guided tour' through Greece, Rome, Africa, India and China.

While taking notes (Cornell), students will begin the SCAN process by writing down some of the key elements of the unit as Mr. Cozens directs them through the text. Students are given advance notice that Tuesday, a SCAN exercise is planned to illustrate how this strategy helps them **prepare to learn** (become a skilled comprehender) in any subject or text.

EVALUATION The card (in terms of affective behaviors)
The written presentation answering Mr. Bailey's questions.
Cornell notes on "The tour"
Map exercise

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Day /Lesson Sheet
Day Five
Unit Two
Chapters 4--9
"The Flowering of Civilizations"
Emphasis: Text references are Chapters 7,8,9
Strategy is SCAN.

Sponge Activity Geography Present the students with a map of North America Ask them to identify the regions On the same scale, present students with maps of China, Africa and India have them cutout these maps and place them over the area known as the United States Discuss the vastness of each region

Reading L Leakey, Olduvai Gorge.

Re-introduce the students to the SCAN tour instruct them to take notes during the tour to highlight elements that will be brought into sharper focus during the SCOUR of the information

The trip begins in Africa the Sahel is the center of drought, war and starvation as we speak you may wish a reading on this it is all over the local paper Looking at Africa automatically sends one to the Nile and ancient kingdoms being unearthed and discovered include the Nubian region and the Kush Kingdom (Upper Egypt south) connect the Red Sea lanes to Zanzibar, Arabian Peninsula and India note the trade connections how did traders get to the Mediterranean through Kush and Axum kingdoms economics digress to south of the Sahara reference the Bantu Migration and how migration is usually accomplished the text makes it seems like a household move what happened when Bantu moved into areas already occupied trade (add-ons) was a great source of wealth on routes leading to North Africa from the Savannah the Ghana cashed in early on Mali wanted its own share and broke away (Timbuktu) How did Musa act like other kings of his day to protect his empire which he held together for 20 years ???(p 190) the Songhai invade after the death of a powerful king (sounds like other places?) where did Moroccans get guns what connection is there among the regions

Why did the Portuguese want to discover a way around Africa? Why would they eventually sack Zanzibar and take it over?

In India p 202 Does the Ramayana compare to other epics? How so discussion p 206 how does it reflect the search for the 'ideal' leader or person? Where (from whence) do Indians get the notion of reincarnation? How does it differ

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from Christianity? Judaism? Buddhism? What is ahimsa... how is it different from environmentalism? Recall the famous story of Alexander "weeping" at the Indus... thinking there were no more worlds to conquer—no matter—he died before he got back home... probably the last paragraph on page 214 should be read in class... the social order of India... still enlivening debate through Ghandi...

China... the great wall... map it out for the students or have them trace it... from whence did the Emperors feel they would be attacked? Did they ever think they would face invasion from the sea (other than Japan?) What was Pax Sinica? How did it correlate to Pax Romana?

Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism... how to relate them to Maoism? (compare attitudes toward 'profits' in Buddhism to the notion of Calvinism... our so-called Protestant Ethic... what kind of person was Heinrich Schlieman had he lived in China? Much respected? Envied?) What is filial piety and how does it hold a society together? What is terra cotta? Who was Marco Polo? How did his journal impact Christopher Columbus and others who had access to its pages? How does a unified belief system UNITE people in some way... Confucianism is not a religion as much as it is a life pattern, an ethos, a way of life... how does it fit neatly into Maoist China today?

END OF SCAN

Seek homework assignments at Synthesis, Comparison and Evaluation...assign accordingly. Do Skills Practice Page 235 in class for writing and reading strategy....individual reading and writing in full sentences.

Skim/Scan/Scour
Unit 4 October 25—29

World History/Cozens (Driver's Ed.)
$5^{th}/6^{th}$

Key Words—skim

Renaissance (relevance...literature, architecture, music, science, 'reasoning', politics, economics, etc.)

Reformation (relevance...Protestantism; salvation by faith alone; iconoclasts//division of political units—Catholic Loyalists; Protestant Reformers; religious wars, etc.)

Absolutism (Divine Right of Kings); examples---Henry VIII, Phillip of Spain, Peter the Great, Frederick of Prussia...Louis of France...and rise of the Nation-State

Mercantilism...role of the colonies. Competition for global wealth....relevance to today's issue....what 'ism's drive nations today?

Age of Discovery.....discovering what? What are we discovering today? How is the word Discovery used in our language today? What popular items bear the word Discovery? (credit card, space shuttle, tv program, educational programs, what else?)

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Scan

Renaissance	Reformation	Politics/'isms'	Economics/'isms'	Discovery

Scan

Renaissance
Reformation
Politics/'isms'
Economics/'isms'
Discovery

Skilled Comprehenders

Sample weekly planning and communication with the reading class instructor.

Pilot Project: Skilled Comprehenders
Week 7 October 4 – 8

You are able to list the different approaches (strategies) to addressing the first three hierarchical stages of Bloom's taxonomy used in your classroom

Thus far, you have emphasized reading skills and affective behaviors needed to implement your strategies

We mentioned that last week we are to become Teachers of Reading in our own content area By linkage through inter-curricula emphases, we hope to develop the same type of reading skills in other content areas

The results of the Gates-McGinitie reading comprehension and vocabulary testing are in We can now begin identifying specific strategies for each child For the more 'in need' student, we have begun the search and application of appropriate outside reading assistance at our school The proficient readers are getting additional material at an advanced stage The remainder of our attention focuses on what we shall call the Mainstream Student those within a standard deviation of our classroom average

More data will be developed as we correlate ITBS scores and PSAT performances but for the next four weeks the emphasis begins a decided shift

Linking Reading to Writing

We know of the cueing systems of good reading in written languages grammar, sound and semantics you may wish to review these elements of reading on your own or we can go over them in discussion

Our first link attempt A Complete Sentence You will probably discover that good readers are pretty good writers and that poor readers are wanting as writers Hence, I guess, the explanation why poor readers seldom write!

In terms of making lesson plans, reserve time (your determination) to have the students write about something of which they know or have some experience or knowledge For your sophomores, tell them this is not only a critical learning skill but also they may wish to consider this a pre-skilling opportunity toward the Georgia Writing Test Most of your students will be aware such as test is being given this month

Review the precepts of English relative to a Complete Sentence Present the Magic Minute on the Complete Sentence and ask for the input from students on your specific assignment In a content area, you may wish to have them 'analyze' a 'chunk' of content material you deem appropriate The goal of the week to make them aware that a) they CAN write and b) it IS difficult and c) it is a part of READING!
Maintain a sample copy of each student's writing from this week. You will find it invaluable later.

Skilled Comprehenders

Sample of a guided reading activity and demonstrated re-telling (paraphrasing) strategy for the Reading Class students and adapted for the content area history class.

We are not ready for the Reading Miscue Inventory and it looks like the professor involved may bè delayed still another week. If that is the case, we will start the RMI after October 18, the day our own Mr. Cozens defends his Ph. D. thesis!! Go! George!!

Regardless of the RMI, however, include writing samples in this week's lesson planning and step up each sampling each week. Plan a minimum one this week, two next, three the third week and four in the fourth week. The writing may be in any format and on any topic. However, spelling, grammar and syntax are legitimate benchmarks for the grade. Do not reduce reading assignments. If possible—and only a possible—please begin letting your lesson plans also reflect

Independent and silent reading times. These two new strategies---writing linkage with beginning emphasis on Complete Sentences (you'll eventually review the four types of sentence construction!) as well as independent reading time are part of the routine operating procedure of your classroom. You will notice some students 'take' to independent reading. Others will need your assistance.
Keep a note on how your students respond to either content or related material independent reading.

For the nine-week student, this will conclude the course this semester. For the semester student, another nine weeks are available to the instructor. I'm sure we are all interested in how students respond.

I am grateful to both of you for your continued support and I trust these strategies you are 'piloting' will truly be a benefit to your students and your fellow teachers. Thanks for sharing your own comments with me to this point. Please continue to maintain an excellent notebook and make your own comments and suggestions as we move through October. The emphasis on writing will be a slow payoff so maintain a strict focus on the basics of Writing, as you handle also the basics of READING. I will be talking with you weekly as before. Kindest regards, Mr. Marnell.

Notes:

Name_____ **Date**_____

Paraphrasing (Telling the story)

D1/w1

Digging in

Read the attached excerpt from Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage.*

Words I don't know:

Briefly describe the situation (paraphrase, in writing) the situation the *Youth* finds himself in…:

Skilled Comprehenders

Sample of a KWL Application Strategy

Name_____ **Date**_____

Fall 1999-2000 d1wl KWL Exercise

Visualizing

Here is a list of common instructions printed by a manufacturer of plumbing devices for changing faucet handles. Read the instructions. The manufacturer has asked you to complete a drawing that it wishes to print along with the instructions. You will need to confer with your peers in the event you are unfamiliar with certain nomenclature. Use the back of this page for your 'engineering drawing'.

- ✓ **Turn off water supply.**
- ✓ **Pry off handle cap with sharp pointed tool.**
- ✓ **Remove handle screws at top of handle and keep for re-use with new handle.**
- ✓ **Remove handle by pulling straight up.**
- ✓ **Place handle on stem and tighten with handle screw.**
- ✓ **Replace handle cap and turn on water.**

Words I don't know:

Things I need to know or want to know:

What I have learned:

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Sample of a Guided Reading exercise adaptable to several reading strategies and demonstrated by Mr. Marnell for a special education and regular education teacher.

The activity was built around a special education class of two small groups (4 and 5 students each) applying collaborative activity as well as involving interdisciplinary techniques: a history class involved in writing responses relative to their study of the First World War and the period 1920-1940.

Mr. Marnell showed the cover of the book and began a discussion encouraging student predictions about the text. He read aloud and demonstrated a Think Aloud. The speaking part of the demonstration was Q&A with students. The lesson included a written activity and all students participated (they wrote something!).

Intent of the presentation was to demonstrate relevance of reading in the content area instruction and adaptability of strategies to class interests and reading abilities.

From the novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Remarque; often assigned reading or support reading for world history studies or American history studies surrounding the study of 20th Century events.

Reference pages: 68 and 69 (Fawcett Crest books edition).

Literal:

1. During what period of the day does this passage occur?
2. What was "...wasted on the rats.?"
3. Where is the passage taking place?

Interpretive:

1. The recruit is given ..."a hiding." What is being done?
2. What is the reference to ..."this bombardment is too much for the poor devils."?

Critical:

1. In the passage described by the author, do you feel such reactions are real for the characters involved?

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Sample: Maintaining Communication with teachers
Through a newsletter.

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Freshman Academy *Quick Notes*
Southwest DeKalb High School

Week of March 27 - 31

Trust you will have a wonderful, restful **Spring Break**. Thanks for all you do each day of the year.

Academy teachers, please plan to attend a half-hour meeting on Tuesday afternoon, **April 11**, after school in the Media Center for a quick update on summer plans as well as notes about ending the school year. Each teacher is expected to attend.

With the end of the year planning, your teams will need to update any notes you have about your **interdisciplinary projects**. Dr. Lottie and Mr. Marnell will need the final notes by April 28 if possible (assuming the project is in its final stages or has ended. Most will be completed by then).

Year-end **reading testing** is upcoming. Stay tuned for more details. **Dr. Henson** will have additional comments on Academy reading instruction efforts at the upcoming meeting after Spring Break. There are some exciting things being planned now and your reactions sought.

The **Premier Agendas** are in place throughout the ninth grade Academy students by now...please insist on your students having their 'passports' handy when they ask to leave your room. Do not issue paper passes any more unless you absolutely have to (given the circumstance). We are also standing by in the event we have an opening for a fundraiser through concessions to pay our final portion of the bill owed. Everyone appreciates your willingness to help out.

If bathroom doors are stuck or can't be opened during a particular class, please issue restroom passes to the 4200 building only. Passes should show up on the student's passports.

A reminder: enrichment in your class is for *your* class. Do not request students go to your room from another teacher or send your students to other classes unless you clear it with Mr. Marnell or Dr. Lottie. Enrichment is instructional time.

If you have special **cultural or international-type events** planned, and it involves foods, etc., make sure you have specified the same in your lesson plans as part of your instructional efforts and Dr. Lottie is made aware of it.

Foods and drinks still show up in the classrooms...and book bags. This is not a discretionary item, please. Tell students to take care of lunch in the cafeteria and their book bags go to the lockers in the gym (athletes) and hallways (regular lockers). It's a security matter from the top, please stand by it. You are the only one who can make it work for all of us.

Mrs. Sapp is getting with our teams involved in the **Globe-Fearon** Project (Filliat) and we are hoping for a terrific finish for the school year in this reading assistance area. Thanks for all your hard work. Thanks, too, to **Mrs. Meredith** who spearheaded the tobacco education lessons with **Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Parris and Mr. Bass**. Also, a special thanks to **Ms. Knight** on the Agenda sales and to **Mrs. Weberg** for coordinating distribution. Welcome back, **Mrs. Fagbemi**! You are a wonderful group. Go home...relax...have a great Spring Vacation! —Mr. Marnell.

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